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BikeAlameda Launches Estuary Shuttle

Written by SAM FELSING Published: THURSDAY, 18 AUGUST 2011

New bus bridge will make trekking through poor air quality, cramped quarters in tube a thing of the past

There's now a better way to get across the estuary on the West End. On Monday, the Estuary Crossing Shuttle went into operation.

The free shuttle provides service from the College of Alameda to the Lake Merritt Bart Station. It can hold 24 passengers and 13 bicycles. It runs every 30 minutes from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., and from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. It's open to all Alameda residents to use. The estuary crosser is a result of the 2009 "Estuary Crossing Study." The study, which was commissioned by the Alameda Transportation Commission (ATC), Caltrans, Bike Alameda, the City of Oakland and the City of Alameda, sought to find better ways in which those living along the estuary could cross it.

The study found that many west-end Alameda residents who cross the estuary do so only to go a short distance. For instance, nearly 2,500 students are enrolled at both Alameda College and Laney College and thus move back and forth between the two colleges frequently. The study also found that bicyclists and pedestrians who cross the Posey Tube are unsatisfied with the moving space they are given in the tube. As a way to help both the short distance estuary users, and as the Posey Tube bicyclist/pedestrians, the study's researchers suggested a shuttle to serve both groups.

In September, the city council asked City Manager Anne Marie Gallant to submit a TFCA Regional Fund application to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) requesting \$430,000 in funds to create the shuttle. Luckily for the city, it got the funds.

BAAQMD plans on only paying for the shuttle for at least a year. In September, the city will ask the air quality agency for money to operate the shuttle for an additional year. Whether the city gets its additional funding will depend on how many people use the shuttle.

When asked for comment about the shuttle, Vice Mayor Rob Bonta stated: "The shuttle is a great example of what regional partnerships can accomplish in these constrained



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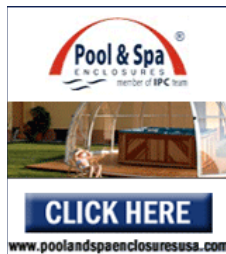
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budgetary times. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the City of Oakland, the City of Alameda, BART, the College of Alameda, Bike Alameda, and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District for their collective efforts to bring this project to fruition."



Bicycling Reduces Global Warming

Did you know that over half of Alameda's greenhouse gases come from motor vehicles?

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) issued a Baseline Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report for the City of Alameda in January 2007, which indicated 53 percent of Alameda's emissions come from transportation sources. The good news is bicycling has zero emissions. About 40 percent of trips in the U.S. are within two miles of home. Bicycling can be a practical mode of transportation for short and even longer trips in and around Alameda, with our flat terrain, bike lanes, and 25 mph zones. Every gallon of gas you save by biking, keeps 19.4 lbs of CO2 out of our air according to the Environmental Protection Agency's website.

Tips to surviving the Tube

If you really really must take the tube, consider these tips courtesy of BikeAlameda.

- Bring earplugs, and wear them going through the tube. All you can hear in the tube is traffic noise, and earplugs should soften the blow to your senses.
- Turn on your bike light, and make sure it's pointed straight ahead (and perhaps slightly up) so any oncoming bike will see you.
- Turn in any mirrors so they won't hit the railings.
- Put on rain pants and a junky coat so in case you have to pass somebody going the other way, you won't ruin your clothes by touching the railing or wall.
- Ride the brake going down into the tube so you don't go too fast. The slightest deviation from the path will wipe you out!
- Take a deep breath, and try to stay relaxed.

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BikeAlameda's mission is to encourage everyday use of the bicycle in and around Alameda. The group works to increase the city's bicycle network and facilities, to educate the community about the benefits of safe bicycling, and to provide a community to which Alameda bicyclists can belong.

BikeAlameda encourages safe streets, convenient access, thriving business districts, and healthy citizens. BikeAlameda is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) California corporation.

For more information, visit www.bikealameda.org.